

Lives of Typical Americans

Continued from Preceding Page.

both in form and in substance. The title page shows that he has been assisted in its composition by Mr. Samuel Crowther, who is an Eastern newspaper man resident on Long Island, and the author of a "Life of George W. Perkins." We should be better able to appraise the literary ability of Mr. Ford if we knew what parts of the book proceeded from his pen and what parts were written by Mr. Crowther. As it is, we can only compare the style to that of a journalistic free lance, clear, direct, dogmatic and occasionally breezy and slashing. There is no doubt left in the mind of the reader as to what the author means, whether it be Ford who is speaking or Crowther. He tells us that Henry Ford was born at Dearborn, Mich., on July 30, 1863; that it was life on his father's farm that impelled him to devise ways and means of improving transportation; that a gasoline buggy which ran satisfactorily in 1893 was his first motor car, and that on May 31, 1921, the Ford Motor Company turned out car No. 5,000,000! He then goes on to propound and illustrate the principles and methods which have made the Ford automobile industry the most successful of any in the world. The book might well fulfill the office of a manual of business aphorisms—it is so full of advice and instruction based on actual observation and personal experience in the successful conduct of a mighty industry. Here are a few of Henry Ford's more striking propositions:

"The primary functions are agriculture, manufacture and transportation. As long as agriculture, manufacture and transportation survive, the world can survive any economic or social change. Business is merely work. Speculation in things already produced—that is not business. It is just more or less respectable graft. But it cannot be legislated out of existence. Laws can do very little.

"Business is not the reason why the United States was founded. The Declaration of Independence is not a business charter, nor is the Constitution of the United States a commercial schedule. The United States—its land, people, Government and business—are but methods by which the life of the people is made worth while. We cannot live without business and we cannot live without government.

The welfare of the country is squarely up to us as individuals. That is where it should be and that is where it is safest.

"There can be no greater absurdity and no greater disservice to humanity in general than to insist that all men are equal. Men cannot be of equal service.

"Money chasing is not business. It is the function of business to produce for consumption and not for money or speculation. Money comes naturally as the result of service. My effort is in the direction of simplicity. I do not mean that we shall adopt freak styles. There is no necessity for that. Clothing need not be a bag with a hole cut in it."

Such are some of the sentiments of a captain of industry who is popular enough in his own State to be considered as a possible not to say probable nominee for the Presidency in 1924. Their bearing on the fitness of a candidate depends largely on the question whether they were personally formulated by him or have merely been adopted by him after being formulated by another.

It is an interesting coincidence to find mention of John Burroughs in the autobiography of Henry Ford. One bond of sympathy between the two men was their love of birds. There are five hundred bird houses on the Ford farm, including a martin house called the Hotel Pontchartrain, which contains seventy-six apartments. This testifies to the childlike simplicity of Henry Ford's tastes. Notwithstanding his celebrated peace ship, he denies that his opposition to war is based upon pacifism or any doctrine of non-resistance. He merely contends that fighting never settles international disputes. "It only gets the participants around to a frame of mind where they will agree to discuss what they were fighting about." But if nothing but war will do this, how can war be dispensed with, unless international disputes are to be interminable? However this may be, Henry Ford's patriotism in the late war can hardly be doubted. As soon as the United States went in every facility of the Ford industries was put at the disposal of the Government. In service on the battle fronts, bringing the wounded into safety, no other instrumentality was equal to the Ford car.

Patriotism has never been lacking in any one worthy to be considered a representative American.

H. G. Wells's Short World History

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD. By H. G. Wells. The Macmillan Company.

THE latest offering of H. G. Wells to this eager planet is "A Short History of the World." It is intended for those who have less time, not to say less money, than those who bought "The Outline of History." As Mr. Wells makes haste to assure his admirers in the preface, the new book "is not an abstract or condensation of that former work." This, he says, is a "much more generalized history, planned and written afresh." It contains 427 pages of large type on heavy calendered paper and is illustrated with hundreds of maps and half-tones.

As might be expected, Mr. Wells is at his best in the early stages of his story. He is a zoologist, a biologist and a dreamer; and a writer with these qualifications is well suited to reconstruct the prehistoric drama. If there is in the audience a tired business man who would like to have told to him in simple and swiftly running language the story of the earth's early struggles to amount to something we can recommend the new Wells book as a first class piece of goods. It's a great life if you don't weaken. Nature kept saying to the earth for two billion years—perhaps longer, Mr. Wells admits—and here we are.

A careful reading of these early chapters is to be recommended to impatient people—the kind that try to beat the traffic system. Why hurry? is the reaction of the reader after he learns from Mr. Wells that the Age of Reptiles lasted eighty million years. Wells thinks that toward the end of that period the dinosaurs and the flying lizards must have felt confident of continuing prosperity. And then Fate, or Nature, or whatever you wish to call it, froze them all to death. What patience! To watch something for eighty million years and then say, "You won't do, after all."

Anyway, the diplotocus can't complain that it didn't have time to make good.

While he is dwelling on the very distant past Mr. Wells is guaranteed to thrill the tired business man on every page. He puts the sabre tooth tiger and the woolly rhinoceros through their paces. He shows the Neanderthal and Piltown men as perhaps they were. It is only when he arrives at that part of history which contains persons with family names that the reader sees that Wells is a better scientist than a historian. He rebels at some of the high lights in history—and then proceeds to paint others in. The human imagination, he declares, has been stirred out of all proportion by the figure of Julius Caesar. Maybe that is so. The old Roman roads and Mr. Shakespeare have kept Julius's memory alive for more years, perhaps, than he deserved. But in the same breath Mr. Wells tells us about Lucullus conquering Asia Minor and penetrating to Armenia, later to retire with great wealth into private life. Most of the readers of history nowadays would rather know just how Lucullus had his cooks prepare parsnips and spinach.

Trajan, Mr. Wells takes pains to tell us, crossed the Euphrates. For what purpose and with what result? the tired business man may ask. And if a history of the world needs to say that Trajan crossed the Euphrates, should it not contain at least three lines explaining the method by which another soldier, named Grant, wore down the Confederate armies and saved the Union which fifty years later saved Europe?

Mr. Wells tells us, and there is no objection to it, that in the fourth century Stilicho, the vandal, presided over the armies of Italy and Pannonia. But was it not quite as important to the fortune of

Continued on Following Page.

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